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Researcher Touts Value of Pig Islet Cells in Curing Type 1 Diabetes

Disease Successfully Reversed in Diabetic Monkeys

Nov. 30, 2011 – MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – A research team led by Bernhard Hering, MD, director of the islet transplant program at the University of Minnesota's Schulze Diabetes Institute, has found transplanting pancreatic pig islet cells into diabetic monkeys has successfully reversed the disease. The ultimate goal is to safely transition this procedure to humans, establishing a medical procedure resulting in biological control of blood glucose levels – curing Type 1 diabetes.

Dr. Hering recently shared this research at TEDx Del Mar – a collection of presentations and speakers detailing the progress of Type 1 diabetes research and steps taken toward a cure – aiming to expose this alternative resource to human islets for cell transplant therapy to a broader public.

"Pig islet cells offer unique benefits over human islet cells, including decreased susceptibility to autoimmune attack and potentially unlimited supply," explains Dr. Hering. "We won't have to wait for healthy donors – we'll raise them ourselves."

Raising suitable pigs in compliance with governmental regulations is vital to Dr. Hering's work. Spring Point Project, a non-profit organization based in Minneapolis, Minn., has built and operates a biosecure facility for breeding specially selected, high-health pigs and has supplied pig islet cells to Dr. Hering's team.

About Spring Point Project
Spring Point Project, headquartered in Minneapolis, MN, is working to provide an unlimited source of pig islet cells to accelerate the availability and affordability of islet transplantation to cure diabetes. Spring Point Project works in partnership with the University of Minnesota to provide the source and science needed to move toward a cure for diabetes.

For more information on Spring Point Project, visit www.SpringPointProject.org.

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